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Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCE Music Technology 6MT02
Listening and Analysing

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General Comments

Candidates seemed well-prepared for the special focus styles this year, more so for the Punk and New Wave than for Club Dance.

Candidates answered the full range of artists and styles, but The Sex Pistols and The Clash slightly outweighed Blondie, with Trance, House and Dubstep being fairly evenly split.

The majority of candidates answered most questions and there seemed to be few instances of poor time management.

Significant marks were lost by the candidates answering the wrong question (see below). It is important that candidates read the question thoroughly, rather than assume.

Again, candidates are reminded of the importance of legible handwriting; what cannot be read cannot be marked.

Specific Questions

1b) Very general answers such as ‘reverb’, ‘polished’, ‘compression’ etc. There was very little specificity. Candidates needed to identify the *type* of reverb, *what* was heavily compressed etc.

1c) and 1d) Generally very poorly answered, with very few candidates having the aural skills to identify the chords or the new key.

1e) Fairly well answered with a large number of candidates identifying at least two of: the number of repeats; the shifting panning; the decay.

2b) Not generally well-answered with many candidates not being able to demonstrate an understanding of whether the melody ascends or descends. Candidates are reminded of the need for clarity of note-writing in this kind of question.

2d) Mainly well-answered regarding type of mic and polar pattern (though there was sometimes confusion of these terms), but placement was often non-specific; which end of the flute was the candidate intending? There are still some students under the impression that there is such a thing as a ‘compressor’ mic.

3b) Many candidates gained full marks, but there was still evidence of candidates wearing headphones the wrong way round.

3d) Very few candidates scored full marks on this question, particularly in the third section, where candidates continued counting bars until the end of the chorus, when the question specifically states ‘the verse’.

3e) Many candidates either described the sound as ‘wobbly’, ‘shimmery’, etc. or referred to pitch modulation. Candidates with a more secure understanding of technology were able to identify dynamic modulation.

4a) Generally well answered, but candidates were asked to identify *musical* elements *apart from instrumentation*, and a significant amount made statements concerning general technological issues (‘it was recorded at the same time’, ‘the vocal is distorted’), or made general comments such as, ‘Horn section’, ‘Use of saxophones’ etc.

4c) The majority of candidates answered this well. Some, however, were under the impression that multitrack recording was an option in the 1930s.

4d) Many candidates referred to re-recording the song rather than editing/ manipulating the existing recording.

4e) Fairly well-answered with many candidates scoring top marks. Some, however, outlined the problems rather than coming up with 21st century solutions. There was also significant amount of unnecessarily long-winded responses.

5a) Many candidates gave a spread of years, often a decade, rather than a single year, as asked in the question.

5b) Generally well-answered, although a significant number of candidates had not read the question and gave answers related to guitar and drum performances, lyrics and harmonic structure.

5f) Many candidates referred to mic position rather than the proximity of the guitar to the amp. There were some very good responses which described the feedback loop.

5g) Generally well-answered, with some candidates losing marks by referring to DAW’s and plug-ins, when the question was asking how the effect was achieved in the original time-frame.

5h) As in previous years, the majority of candidates were well-prepared by centres, resulting in good answers. Candidates in the lower mark scale generally gave general, vague answers that could be applied to Punk and New Wave in general, rather than focussing specifically on the chosen artists’ styles.

6aii) Candidates are reminded to read the question carefully; panning, reverb and other technology issues are outside the remit of *performance techniques*.

6c) Some candidates are clearly aware of technological facts surrounding sampling, whilst others are not. The least well-answered section was *signal to noise ratio*. Some students gave their answers in hertz, when the question required kHz. Many of the answers suggest that the candidates’ work in other units is *empirical* rather than based on sound knowledge of *how* the technology works.

6d) Often rather general answers here. Again, it could be assumed that some, or all, of the techniques used would have been taught to candidates. Answers were also often about the rhythm, rather than the editing.

6e) Most candidates were able to identify LPF or wah.

6f) Not as well answered as 5h). Candidates were able to identify ‘four-to-the-floor’ (where appropriate), tempos, and ‘the drop’. There was often reference to specific bands and tracks, which gained no marks as this was not asked for in the question.

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